

LETTER

FROM

SIR SAMUEL EGERTON LEIGH, KNIGHT,[†]

ADDRESSED TO HIS BROTHER,

SIR EGERTON LEIGH, BART.

+ died in
1796

Recommending him to throw off the System of *Hypocrisy*, by quitting a Line wherein he *attempts* to delude the Minds of the *People*, by striving through an *artful* Mode of *Preaching* to convince them he possesses *Religious Principles*, when in *Faët* he has not a true Spark of *Gratitude*, *Humanity*, *Charity*, or any one *Christian Virtue*. And further to recommend him to attend to the *Christian Faith*, as established in the *Church of England*. Whereby he may not only be *restored* to *Society*, but through the *Divine Assistance* of *God*, mend a *Life*, Daily sinking deeper in *Iniquity*, by which he may really do good in the *World*, and *Justice* to his *Family*: and secure *Happiness* for a *Soul* now in a *perilous State*.

18th CHAPTER OF PROVERBS, 19th VERSE.

*A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City:
and their Contentions are like the Bars of a Castle.*

1st CHAPTER OF ECCLESIASTICUS, 29th VERSE.

*Be not an Hypocrite in the Sight of Men: and take good
heed what thou speakest.*

11th CHAP. OF PROV. PART OF THE 9th VERSE.

An Hypocrite, with his Mouth, destroyeth his Neighbour.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

1795.

*Never published; and
the whole edition, as I,
am informed, suppressed
and destroyed.*

To Sir James Winter Lake Bart.

*J.W.
1797.*

cup. 408. m. 29.



TO THE PUBLIC.

YOU will probably at first sight of this letter, feel inclined to blame me for Publishing any thing addressed to a Brother upon terms that you may imagine harsh; but if you were acquainted with every circumstance as *I* am, you would pause to wonder how I could be so mild; for what you will perhaps read now in the light of severity, you would then think too gentle to be the address even of an offended lamb. I have tried all the gentle means that human nature could *invent*, to endeavour to bring my Brother to reason, and to induce him to act with *christian virtue*; and to give you a more perfect idea how *hard* a task it is to move his heart to feeling, I am well *convinced*, and *verily* believe, (for it is not without reason I speak) that if *I* who am his *only Brother*, had been on my *death bed* for want of food to keep life and soul together, and any one had represented my situation to him; he would not have stretched his hand forth to save me, if he thought it would have cost him a twentieth part of what it has already to build meeting houses, and give to strangers who follow him for what they can get. After this hint I think I shall be excluded from censure.

Thank *Almighty God* I shall never in all probability be in want, if *I was*, I most certainly should

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not look to Sir Egerton Leigh for relief, though I should have a just right to do so. I have long threatened to make a publication, and *this* letter was not printed before he read a copy of it, in order that I might try if by a sight of it, he could be moved into reformation before such a step was taken, but finding even *this* application vain, I submit it to the opinion of a candid and generous public, who *will* I am sure upon reflection consider it in a just light.

I not only by this publication endeavour to shame Sir Egerton Leigh, into reason, by which he may afterwards work himself into *true repentance*, but I give useful hints to *those* of his followers who may be deluded by the art of his tongue; and if they think proper to make a right use of my advice, they may in the end find their account in it. I shall now conclude by declaring, I have no intention from this letter than hoping it may do good. *Malice I know* is not within me, for I forgive my enemies, and wish to live in peace and good will towards all mankind; I wish to serve whom I can, and would not go a step to injure *any* one; but if good is to be worked by rough means, I would *use* those means sooner than do *no* good at all, I can therefore only say, I have the honor to be, with all due respect,

Your most obedient and
humble servant,
SAMUEL EGERTON LEIGH.

N. B. As some people are unacquainted with Sir Egerton Leigh's mode of proceeding to which I allude in this letter, I will explain his situation and pursuits in order that those who are strangers to him may understand what I have written more correctly.

Sir Egerton Leigh lives upon an estate, which he obtained by marriage, of between three and four thousand pounds per annum—it is situated in the county of Warwick, distant not more than three miles and a half from the town of Rugby.—Instead of pursuing the line of a Gentleman, which was the wish of his father the late Sir Egerton Leigh, (who was his Majesty's Attorney-General and Surveyor-General of South Carolina,) as also the wish of his whole family—he has turned a strolling Preacher, styling himself a Methodist Preacher—and he goes into several of the neighbouring villages and preaches to the people—in one he gave a lantern to every person that attended his night discourses, in order that they should be able to find their way home again; this I have hinted at in my letter. He has built several meeting houses, and intends as I am informed building more—one in particular that he preached in Woolston, a village about four miles from Rugby—but the people there did not like his doctrine, and as they could get him away by no other means, they beat him, kicked him, and pelted him several times, I have learnt, before he

would leave them, and insulted him in many other ways; I believe they have succeeded, for I do not imagine he will ever attempt to go there again. He has given away a great deal of money and continues to do so, among strangers, and people whom he does not know.—It will not be amiss to observe that he never offers any assistance to his own family on any occasion.

It may not be improper to observe that in order to check any attacks from Anonymous writers, that I declare I will not pay attention to any who may address me; I mention this as it is possible *some* might feel so inclined, and therefore the hint I give will shew their efforts to extort an answer from me will be fruitless. I am sure the world will judge I act right by such a determination; as those who countenance anonymous scribblers, countenance those who would assassinate their neighbours in the dark.

No writing can be honest or deserving of a sensible man's attention, that will not bear the name of its author affixed to it.

THE

THE LETTER.

I SHOULD be happy could I conceive you were intitled to the address of *dear brother* from *me*, and should rejoice to use so tender an expression; but flattery is *not my* plan, I shall write as I feel, and address you as you deserve; your conduct towards me *through life* has been *such*, that it is only from relationship which I cannot help, that I say brother, yet as repentance is possible *even* with the most callous heart, I may some time or other find you worthy of my esteem, and *indeed* should delight in witnessing so great a reformation. It is a bold attempt for so young a man as *I am*, to offer advice on so *serious* and *important* a subject as *religion*, particularly to one so *much* older than myself, for if I am rightly informed you have the advantage of me by nine years; but as I am always happy and *thankful* to any one who will advise *me* where the motive is good, *so* I think I may offer *my* sentiments, when I am *convinced* I act from the principles of *justice*. In the first place, your conduct for many years before marriage, was *not* only imprudent, but attended with vices truly iniquitous. You arrived in England from America after the death of my poor father, with a Lieutenant's commission in the army, and government made you such an allowance as would have supported you as a gentleman in a rational life, and you had the advantage of not being incumbered

by debt. So situated, had you possessed a natural principle of honor, you might have been happy, as you had every prospect of enjoying your life in a society, which would have done credit to yourself as well as family: but your first step was to enter freely into dissipated company, and you had a relish for drinking and sunk into every debauchery which so unmanly a proceeding induced you to court; I say unmanly, because when a man drinks to excess, he is no longer worthy to be classed among a better race than brutes. You *was* not content to seek your *own* destruction, but on my arrival from the island of Madeira in the year 1785, at which time I was a lad only fifteen years of age, instead of *feeling* for me, as an *only brother* ought, by hiding *those* scenes of iniquity which had reduced you and thrown you into so many unpleasant, *aye unhappy* situations, by which *alone*, you could and *must* have seen the impropriety of your proceeding; you not only introduced me into the society of your *friendly demons* (for human beings I cannot call them,) but you took *every* opportunity to strive to persuade me to believe, that a most diabolical mode of contriving to exist, was preferable to being content with a little in an honourable way: I do not mention this lightly, I have living witnesses who can prove the facts, and *would* if necessary. Great God! what a precipice I stood at the brink of, the bottom of which was full of confusion and abomination. How tender was my age; and consequently how *much* more dangerous was my situation; particularly as I might have been inclined to have paid *great* attention to

your advice, fancying you were right, judging of your discretion from your age. But that *great*, and *omnipotent being*, the author of *all* good; saw me, helpless and unprotected, and defended me from the *dreadful snares* which were^{rel} laid against me: and I now *thank Almighty God* I was deaf to your instructions, and ever shunned the evil path you would have led me into. It is with pleasure I reflect, (as you will find in the 8th verse of the 16th chapter of Proverbs) that, better is a *little* with righteousness, than great revenues without right.

This you know is but a *small* part of your evil towards me, then what duty or attention do you owe me, now in your days of reflection; and *so* you would *think*, were you possessed of christian virtue; but I will prove that your present plan, is founded *solely* upon *ostentation* and *vanity*. When a man has led a life of iniquity, and sincerely repents of his crimes, he is not only sorry for what *he* has done with his *own* hands, but he diligently seeks those whom he attempted to lead astray, and when he has found them, he humbly solicits their pardon, (for humility is always becoming a christian, without it, no man can be a good one,) and when he is forgiven, he is happy to countenance them and naturally advises them to pursue virtuous paths, which *he* himself is determined to follow; and if he has offended relations, he conceives himself more *strictly* bound to them, lest his former instructions lead them into vice, which in his time of reformation he views in a light of horror

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and detestation. But what has been your conduct towards me? You first of all sought a woman to make a wife of *me*.—When you accomplished your desire, you fancied, because you had money, that you were out of difficulties, but your difficulties then were *greater*, you never considered how much *more* you had to struggle in your duty towards God to obtain forgiveness than before—but to drop this,—What was your first step? To withdraw yourself from those who had supported you in your *misery*, to shun your own family who had *cherished* you, and to despise the *very* persons who *saved* you from *destruction*. Do you not recollect that even *young* as I was, how *much* you esteemed my advice upon *most* occasions, you found my arguments were reasonable, and I recommended you to *that* which was just, and when you *were* guided by me, you found yourself honorably successful. What has been your conduct since you could live without my help? You have shunned me, you have despised me, and have taken every step to oppress me, and even in your present sanctified state, you cease not to be my enemy. In what part of this true account does the principles of virtue and christianity shine forth in you: so far from it, you are fixing a stamp to your *former* iniquity, which makes your private life worse than ever.

I have frequently pointed out to you, how without much trouble you could have established the

happinefs of your family, and *my* letters though mild and moving to a feeling heart, have by *you* been treated with filent contempt. *What* do you mean by fuch unbecoming haughtinefs? What do you expect will be your fate hereafter for fuch unchristianlike behaviour? If you, who are but an insignificant creature of this earth, defpife one of your fellows, and will not hear him, but *reject* him, what ears can you expect *God* will have for you when you are inclined to call upon him; but that *great being*, whose fmalleft grain of goodnefs is far preferable to the *whole flock* of virtue contained in this world, defpifes *no* one, his ears are open to *all*, and his hand ftretched forth ready to affift us in the time of trouble; reflect ferioufly on this fentence of mine, and if you have any thing left to defpife, common fenfe will teach you to believe it is yourfelf. I have tried every plan to bring you to reason, but without effect, I now try as I have *long* threatened, whether you can be fhamed into reformation by a public letter; I do not print it folety for *this* purpofe, but alfo with a hope that your followers may read it, and no longer fuffer themfelves to be deluded; though I believe many who follow you, do it for what they can get, and *many* who hear you, liften to fatisfy curiofity, by which they are enabled to ridicule you with more correctnefs: but I pity the few who attend to your difcourfe, *their* motives perhaps are good, *they*, as ftangers, look upon your proceeding in a charitable and virtuous light, but they *do* not fee every part of your conduct as *I* do, if they did I believe you would preach to very thin benches.

I *much* pity the little children left to your instruction; consider well, I beseech you, how serious a task is the education of children; you take them at an age when their little tender minds can be bent any way, you think proper to direct them: take care of what you do: if in their hearts you establish the principles of hypocrisy or any other evil, *that same* you will have to answer for before the great judge of all mankind, on a certain day which *must* arrive, and perhaps is near at hand. You are called charitable by some of the poor, because you give them money; but tell *me*, where is your charity? if you are to give money away, first of all examine yourself, and think whether there is no part of your own family who supported you in adversity, and whom you could *materially* serve at a *much* less expence than what it costs you to give to people who pretend to agree with you in sentiment, merely for the use of your pocket. Reflect on this, and ask yourself *where* is your charity; examine yourself again when you are building *meeting houses*, and ask your *conscience* whether you have no near relations who assisted to save you from *destruction*, over whose head a warm roof would be comfortable, and who may be inconvenienced to procure one; then again reflect on your charity, and look upon your meeting houses, and if you have only an *idea* of what virtue means, the walls of your buildings within *which* you pretend to open the gospel of Jesus Christ, will appear more odious to your sight, than would the vile remains of Sodom and Gomorrah. If you would act like a christian

serve *those* who assisted you in *adversity*, and seek to make friends with *those* whom you have much injured; but discourse not upon religion before you understand the principles of the christian faith; it is presumption to attempt to teach others, *that* which you are ignorant of yourself. Men are to be judged of *here*, according to their works and actions, not according to their words, it is easy for an artful man to say a great deal.

What avails all your strange system of preaching without good works; you prove your ostentation by seeking strangers to praise you, and shunning those who have been your friends: but when this is brought to light how will your preaching appear? why it will appear as I shall prove to you by the words in the first verse of the 13th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, wherein is written, Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

To speak with the tongues of men, I should conceive means to speak in languages which men understand: therefore, let me allow you to preach unto the people in a style of excellence, superior to any thing ever before heard, even beyond the conception of man: *what* are you without charity? nothing: you can do nothing without grace in the spirit; by grace in the spirit, I mean that you shall possess love; for by love you work in the christian faith righteously, and without it you cannot. In the 2d verse of the 13th chapter of

St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, you will find these words :

And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

I do not know whether you have attempted to prophecy; possibly you have, for this seems to be an age in which prophets attempt to rise; but you see by the words of St. Paul, tho' you have the gift of prophecy and know all things, still what are you without charity; nothing. Then how much *worse* even than nothing are *you*, who have neither the *gift of prophecy*, or *good speech*. I have been informed that you as well as your lady, have at times looked up, and said you saw Christ; this is a delusion indeed: in former days visions appeared, and miracles were worked in order to enlighten the minds of people sufficiently to establish the christian faith: as soon as christianity was *proved* to be the just doctrine, as has been clearly handed down to us, miracles ceased, as being no longer necessary to give us information. I am told a man who wants a little money has need only to run to you and say he has seen Jesus Christ, and he is presently satisfied: if you attend to such tales you will doubtless hear of visions enough. I heard that a coachman of yours had a conversation one day with our Saviour, while he was feeding your horses in the stable; this I believe was related by your lady to one of *my* sisters, and I think the

coachman appeared to declare the fact,—*that* saint I fancy you have since discharged.

I much fear you do not go the right road to enlighten the people, I believe you never enlightened so many as you did at the time you presented each with a lantern who attended your Night discourses on divinity in one of the neighbouring villages. I heard of this plan of giving every one a candle and lantern who attended your evening preaching; how absurd the idea: every poor man in the neighbourhood who fancied a lantern, naturally amused himself by spending one evening with *you*, and he was satisfied. I believe independent of religion you are not so partial to our glorious government as you should be, I am sorry for it, for your father was a great man, who held *high places*, and he found both a public and private friend in George the II. as well as his present Majesty, who is beloved by his subjects.

I recollect your comparing a certain personage to the devil on earth, and his attendants, &c. to his imps, seeking whom they might devour. I wonder a religious man, whose conscience of course is tolerably clear, should dislike a government, and still be content to live under it and not only *that*, but should *condescend* to receive an allowance from it Quarterly at the Treasury: for my part if *I* hated the country, I should not only throw up what was allowed me, but I should seek a place to reside in where I thought I could be better *pleased*. To drop this subject, I will return

again to religion; as I before observed, if you would act like a *good* christian, before you give money out of doors remember those who stood your friends in the time of necessity, and return unto those who have lost money to you at play, *that* which you received when they should *not* have lost; when you have done this, and taken care you do not impoverish your own family, then if you have any thing left to part with, you will be justified in giving to a poor stranger who may stand in need of your assistance, and I will admit the act to be charitable; provided you have no other motive for so doing than really to soften and lessen the sufferings of the petitioner, if you hope for praise, there will be no charity in you, though you give all you are worth and deprive yourself of every comfort in life. Perhaps you will imagine that as you once wrote me word you were a methodist preacher, that as I am of the established church, I despise methodism: be assured I do not, I have looked into the principles and know no reason why a methodist should not be as good a man as any other; indeed I believe no *true* one would follow you who knew the difference between your private conduct and public speech. Let me advise you to give up hypocrisy and seek the true paths of virtue, and if you are partial to a religious life, I dare say you might in the course of time be enabled to deliver a discourse in the established church, perhaps you might procure a living upon your own estate, and *that* would be a respectable thing; you have doubtless disgusted *all* reasonable beings by your

conduct, but if you acknowledge your faults in a contrite manner and reform, I have no doubt but you will find *that* charity among people, that you will again be well received by them, and they will be happy to embrace you, rejoicing at the recovery of *one* so nearly lost.—It is amazing to *me*, that you did not acknowledge all your faults to the world as you pretended to be so great a penitent; *there* would have been policy in such a step, for as you certainly must have been conscious all along that you did not act with charity and kindness towards your nearest and dearest friends, you had every reason to expect some of them would retail your iniquity sooner or later, and by *your* doing it beforehand, you would have *so* far saved your credit.—What I have related in this letter is but a trifling hint compared to what I shall in all probability bring forth, unless the publication has the effect I wish it—remember what the 19th verse of the 18th chapter of Proverbs says, a brother offended is harder to won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

But though I am much offended, and not without the greatest reason, yet I believe I am a brother *not* so hard to be won, though you have persecuted me, I freely forgive you the past, and whenever you are inclined to reform come and tell me so; and if you can point out how I can assist you in it, I will lend you all my aid; but beware of the

things I may remind you of, if you delay in your repentance: I have long experienced that to move your heart requires great skill, I hope however at length to be successful. I beseech you to read this with attention; I was at first shocked to hear how you were beat and kicked, &c. in the village of Woolston, for attempting to preach among the people; upon reflection I was glad of it, and thought they served you right; perhaps you call *that* persecution and say it gives you pleasure, but *that* for *you* would be *truly* ridiculous; it is very well for a man who has a clear conscience, and who takes every opportunity to shun the paths of vice, and strives all in his power to do good: it is natural for such a man to feel pleased when he is persecuted, because he reflects with joy upon the degree of fortitude he possesses, and is delighted to think that no evil attacks shall check him in his endeavours to do justice; but for *you*, a poor miserable sinner, to delight in being insulted is vain and idle; it should bring you to reflect on the impropriety of your conduct, and determine you to pursue *that* which is lawful and right, by which you may save your soul alive.

I have been informed that you have repeatedly said that in the established church of this country the gospel is not preached; I am surprised that you should exhibit so much ignorance; indeed I can hardly say ignorance, for *I* have great reason to construe all your actions and intentions into the worst light; and so far from thinking you a peace-

able man, I think you preach with a hope of rousing the minds of the people to be discontent in their several situations; many such attempts have been made before by artful men who have strove to gain their point by pretending to be religious, and as *you* do not hesitate to oppress your nearest and dearest friends and relations, you most certainly would not be shocked at the overthrow of nations; but the walls of Old England, which are supported by virtue, are too strong ever to be pushed down by the deliberate hands of cunning men. In one of your late discourses I understand you addressed the people saying, *they* were going home to a mouldy crust while *you* was going to a good dinner and a bottle of wine; this was a great attempt indeed to make them feel content in their humble state; had I worded the sentence for you, I should have said, Rejoice Oh people, *you* who are going home to live content upon a mouldy crust, rejoice to think it is the humble fare gained *honestly* by the *labour* of *your* hands, and praise your God who gave you health and strength to work for it; but as for *me*, pity *me*, who am going home to a good dinner and bottle of wine, which I have unworthily obtained by the artful insinuations of my tongue.

This would have been more conscionable, and more like a christian, as it would have been an endeavour to make every one satisfied in their state but yourself, who deserve not to be so well off. I am married to an *amiable* young lady, correctly

agreeable to the meaning and principles of matrimony, which I need not explain, as the principles upon which a christian *should* marry, are very generally understood; I am indeed happy in my choice; I will not attempt to describe her virtues lest I fail in the undertaking; let it suffice to say,

She is,—but words are wanting to say what;
Think what a wife should be—and she is that.

My lady has never yet looked up and declared she saw *God*, and indeed I do not esteem her the less for not having so much power: I doubt not when the time of her departure from this world arrives, but she will *truly* rejoice in so *glorious* a fight, and will experience *all* bliss, by occupying a seat in a place where the innocent are rewarded with everlasting happiness. I judge by actions, not by words alone.

Having now written as fully as I think necessary on the present occasion, I shall conclude by recommending you diligently to seek repentance whereby you may obtain forgiveness of your sins (which certainly weigh heavy upon you just now) and by the *blessing* of *God* you may inherit the *kingdom* of *heaven*. As we have a just and merciful *God* to deal with, so we have a right to expect that the greatest sinners amongst us by *true* repentance, may be forgiven, but let us not delay one moment, it is presumption to determine to sin to day and say to-

morrow we will seek repentance; as life is uncertain, so we should make good use of our time, lest we be snatched away in the midst of our iniquity; and besides this sinning to day, saying to-morrow we will repent, would in fact be no repentance at all: a true penitent is one who will suddenly feel ashamed and sorry for all his past transgressions, and will immediately strive to mend his life for the love of God, determining to sin no more. *He* that can make up his mind to sin for the *next* hour to come *cannot* be sorry for what is past, consequently he is no penitent. What sort of a man is he who quits an evil path every time sickness seizes him, and when he recovers returns to sin again, *that* man acts from fear, *not* from principle, and consequently he will not find favour in the sight of God. We should endeavour to be as much prepared for death at the time we enjoy health as at any other time; for by such a system alone can we hope for happiness; therefore let me entreat you to examine well your conscience, and do your duty as is becoming a christian; I do not know what will incline you more to repentance and reformation than a strict attention to the holy scripture, and the laws as established in the church of England, for by these you will learn to throw off hypocrisy, and *for* it you may substitute all manner of virtue; by which you will strengthen in your love for God, and good will and charity towards mankind; and whenever by *works* and *actions* you shew yourself a penitent, and will say unto me,

brother I repent, will you forgive me, you shall find yourself forgiven, and I will embrace you with all the affection that a brother ought, and strive all that may lay in my power, *with honour*, to make you happy; and with assuring you that I shall constantly pray to the Almighty to grant me so joyous a day. I remain with every sincere hope and wish for your speedy repentance and reformation,

Your Brother,

S. E. L.

P.S. I must not forget to mention I have heard that your *lady* as well as yourself has preached occasionally; I shall however make no remarks upon this, as it is so truly ridiculous that I am sure I should be at a loss for words to say enough against such a proceeding.

The hurry of business having caused the Printer to make some mistakes in the foregoing Pages—the candid reader is requested to correct them in the following Errata.

In the title page, line 11, for—when in fact he has not a true spark of gratitude, humanity, charity, *read*—when in fact it does not appear as if he possessed a true spark.

Page 5, 20th line, for—in one he gave a lantern, *read*—I have been informed in one he gave a lantern.

Page 6, 8th line, *add*,—that is to his own family, on his father's side.



